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REVIEW: Bucking the Sarge

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Alabama schools. *The Schoolhouse Door* is the story of the events at the University of Alabama that led up to this incident and the way that segregation issues were eventually resolved at the University of Alabama. One of the first African-American students admitted to the University of Alabama was a library science student named Autherine Lucy. Ms. Lucy was not allowed to eat in the college dining hall or to live in campus housing. Unfortunately, Ms. Lucy was expelled from the university only a few days after she began the program because of racial unrest, even though she did not instigate the unrest. In order to write this powerful narrative history, Dr. Clark interviewed former University of Alabama students, faculty and administrators from the 1956-65 era. He tells their stories and interweaves documentation from campus policies, faculty meeting minutes and other documents from the '50's and '60's. The book explores the opposite views of two college presidents: Dr. Oliver Carmichael held the view that the university is powerless to move beyond political sentiment; Dr. Frank Rose, his successor, believed that the university could take an active role in promoting desegregation efforts. Dr. Clark uses a fair and balanced approach in telling this story. *The Schoolhouse Door* is a valuable narrative account of the desegregation movement in the South and its implications for desegregation nationally. This book is appropriate for high school, academic and public libraries. »

— Reviewed by **Ravonne Green**
Valdosta State University

JUVENILE

ABC Safari by Karen Lee (Sylvan Dell Publishing, 2007; ISBN: 978-0-9777423-0-1, \$15.97).

Author/illustrator Karen Lee has created a beautiful journey through the alphabet. Clearly researched, this title teaches while it captivates young readers. More than just an alphabet book, *ABC Safari* uses beautifully descriptive language to highlight the many details of the animal kingdom. "His face is fiercely sprouting horns. Just 'keep away' his grimace warns. But truly he's a gentle guy. The Rhino's really rather shy." Children will delight in the outstanding illustrations, encompassing animals of many different biomes. This fact-based book is suitable for reading aloud to a group. The Creative Minds section at the end is reproducible for a memory



game. The only downfall of the book is that the animal profiles do not include locations. This title would be an excellent addition to any collection. »

— Reviewed by **Lindy Moore**
West Georgia Regional Lithia Springs Branch

Bucking the Sarge by Christopher Paul Curtis (Wendy Lamb Books, 2004; ISBN 0-385-32307-7, \$15.95).

"Normally a ninth grader isn't what you think of when you mention the word 'crusader,' but that's precisely what Flint, Michigan's Whittier Middle School student Luther T. Farrell has turned out to be." Yes, Luther T. Farrell at the age of 15 is a crusader in a variety of ways. He has a college fund with \$92,000 and growing, credit cards to use and a certified driver's license. Mom, "the Sarge," pulls strings in all directions as she milks the system to build an empire using housing found in the slums for group homes. She claims all of this is being done for her one and only son, Luther. Despite Luther's age, the Sarge has placed him in charge of "The Happy Neighbor Group Home for Men," where the complete care of the residents becomes his job. Luther has higher ambitions and plans than running a slum housing empire for the Sarge. He places his focus on working hard in school, winning his third science fair project in a row and moving on to Harvard and graduating as a philosopher. Yet, he is completely dominated by his terrifying mother. Another dominating female in his life is the love of his life, Shayla, though she is his science fair project rival. When his science fair project on the dangers of lead wins, it attracts attention from the media. This attention infuriates the Sarge, and Luther realizes that the Sarge has no college money for him. With the help of his best friend Sparky, a pit bull named Poofy and the world's scariest rat, Luther sets out to break away from Sarge. The plan is put into motion. Hurray for Luther. This is a strong, motivated character. All readers will be cheering for Luther and his gang with each paragraph they read. Highly recommended for middle school students. »

— Reviewed by **Cheryl A. Carter**
Jasper Middle School

